

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A miniature keyboard comprising:
a plurality of keys for inputting data to a portable electronic device;
wherein said keys of said plurality of keys are individually sized
such that multiple ones can be depressed by a single finger tip depression; and
10 wherein said keys comprise at least one set of keys that are raised
for providing key differentiation and to facilitate single key selection.

2. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality
of keys comprise a first row of keys and a second row of keys and wherein the
15 surface of said first row of keys is raised above the surface of said second row of
keys.

3. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said rows
decrease in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said
20 miniature keyboard.

4. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said rows increase in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said miniature keyboard.

5. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said plurality of keys is different shapes.

6. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

7. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

8. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of keys comprise at least two columns of keys wherein the surface of a first column of keys is raised above a second column of keys.

9. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said columns decrease in height from one side of said miniature keyboard to another side of said miniature keyboard.

10. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality of keys is of different shapes.

11. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

5 12. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

13. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 1 wherein said raised set of keys comprise a substantially checkered pattern on said miniature keyboard.

14. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 13 wherein said set of keys is of different shapes.

15 15. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 13 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

16. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 13 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

20 17. A keyboard arrangement as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of keys makes a tone when pressed.

18. A keyboard arrangement as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of keys requires different amount of pressures to depress.

19. A portable computer system comprising:

5 a processor coupled to a bus;

memory coupled to said bus;

a miniature keyboard coupled to said bus and comprising:

a plurality of keys for inputting data;

10 wherein said keys are individually sized such that multiple ones can be depressed by a single fingertip depression; and

wherein said keys of said plurality of keys comprise at least one set of keys that are raised for providing key differentiation and to facilitate single key selection.

15 20. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 19 wherein said keys comprise at least two rows and wherein the surface of a first row of keys is raised above the surface of a second row of keys.

21. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said 20 rows decrease in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said miniature keyboard.

22. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said rows of said keys increase in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said miniature keyboard.

5 23. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said plurality of keys is different shapes.

24. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

25. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

26. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 19 wherein said plurality of keys comprise at least two columns of keys wherein the surface of a first column of keys is raised above a second column of keys.

27. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 26 wherein said columns of said keys decrease in height from a side of said miniature keyboard to another side of said miniature keyboard.

28. A portable electronic device comprising:

a processor coupled to a bus;

a memory coupled to said bus;

a display screen coupled to said bus; and

an input mechanism comprising a plurality of keys that are individually sized such that each individual key surface is substantially smaller than a surface of a single finger depression and wherein said plurality of keys comprise a set of keys having surfaces raised relative to other keys of said plurality of keys to facilitate key navigation and key selection.

29. A portable electronic device as described in Claim 28 wherein said plurality of keys comprise alternating rows of keys of differing heights with respect to adjacent rows.

30. A portable electronic device as described in Claim 29 wherein said plurality of keys comprise alternating columns of keys of differing heights with respect to adjacent columns.

31. A portable electronic device as described in Claim 29 wherein said plurality of keys comprise alternating key diagonals of differing heights with respect to adjacent key diagonals.